

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 SAM-01 ORM-02 DHA-02 /085 W

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R 121455Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 167

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1084

E. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS

SUBJ: NOMINATION OF NEW MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL AGAIN HIGHLIGHTS
THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE

BEGIN SUMMARY: NOMINATION OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY SOCIAL
SCIENTIST SHLOMO AVINERI AS NEW MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL
("NUMBER TWO" IN THE MINISTRY) IS EFFORT BY ALLON TO
STRENGTHEN MODERATE CAMP WITHIN ISRAELI BUREAUCRACY.
NRP/LIKUD HARDLINERS ARE TRYING TO BLOCK THE APPOINTMENT
CHARGING THAT AVINERI IS OUTSPOKEN "PRO-PALESTINIAN".
IN RECENT INTERVIEW, AVINERI ENDORSED YARIV FORMULA ON
TALKING WITH PLO BUT ALSO SAID THAT, IN CIRCUMSTANCES
OF MUTUAL RECOGNITION, HE COULD ACCEPT INDEPENDENT
PALESTINIAN STATE. END SUMMARY.

1. MFA SPOKESMAN CONFIREMD FEB 11 THAT FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON
HAS NOMINATED PROFESSOR SHLOMO AVINERI, DEAN OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY'S
SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY, AS MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL. AVINERI, WELL
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KNOWN FOR HIS MODERATE/DOVISH POLITICAL VIEWS, HAS NO PREVIOUS

DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE BUT HAS SERVED FOR MANY YEARS AS CONSULTANT TO THE MFA AND AS PROMINENT ACADEMIC HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN SENT ABROAD ON LECTURE TOURS TO PRESENT ISRAELI CASE. HE REPLACES AVRAHAM KIDRON WHO WILL BE TAKING OVER AS AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS AS OF APRIL 15.

2. AVINERI NOMINATION, WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED TO CABINET FOR APPROVAL ON FEBRUARY 15, HAS ALREADY EVOKED SHARP REACTIONS FROM ISRAELI POLITICIANS. APPEARING ON POPULAR RADIO PROGRAM IN DECEMBER 1975 TO PRESENT HIS VIEWS ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE, HE CAUSED QUITE A STIR BY SAYING THAT HE SAW NO REASON WHY ISRAEL SHOULD NOT TALK WITH RESPONSIBLE PALESTINIANS OR EVEN PLO WERE THEY TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL AND RENOUNCE USE OF TERROR. AVINERI ALSO SAID THAT HE SAW NO REASON WHY ISRAEL SHOULD CATEGORICALLY RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN, WITH SAME PROVISIO AS APPLIED TO DEALING WITH PLO. HE MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH PLO WAS DEDICATED TO DESTRUCTION OF STATE OF ISRAEL THERE WAS NO SENSE OR PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL TO TALK WITH IT.

3. SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER HAMMER (NRP), SPEAKING ON ISRAELI RADIO FEB 12, SAID THAT AVINERI APPOINTMENT REPRESENTED A DETERIORATION IN ISRAELI FOREIGN POLICY AND THAT HE WOULD OPPOSE IT AT CABINET MEETING. LIKUD MK LANDAU ON SAME PROGRAM CHARACTERIZED AVINERI AS "OUTSPOKEN PRO-PALESTINIAN" AND SAID HE WOULD SEEK TO BLOCK APPOINTMENT IN KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE. ON THE OTHER HAND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER RAPHAEL (NRP) SAID THAT HE DID NOT REGARD IT AS CABINET RESPONSIBILITY TO TRY TO BLOCK SUB-MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS AND THAT POLICY IN ANY CASE WAS NOT MADE AT DIRECTOR GENERAL LEVEL.

4. LABOR PARTY MK SARID, IN COUNTER-INITIATIVE TO LIKUD, HAS TABLED FOR URGENT DISCUSSION IN KNESSET AN ITEM CHARACTERIZING AVINERI APPOINTMENT AS "A REFRESHING CHANGE IN THE STERIL LANDSCAPE OF GEOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY". PRESIDENT OF THE ISRAELI COUNCIL FOR ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE, WHICH CALLS FOR WITHDRAWAL TO 1967 BORDERS AND TALKING WITH PLO (TEL AVIV 0519), HAS CHARACTERIZED AVINERI NOMINATION AS AN IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTRIBUTION TO ADVANCING THE "ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CAUSE". MOKED MK MEIR PEIL HAS DESCRIBED LIKUD/NRP OPPOSITION AS A SCANDAL, NOTING THAT NO VOICES OF PROTEST WERE RAISED IN KNESSET AGAINST APPOINTMENT OF ARIEL SHARON AS PRIME MINISTER'S GENERAL ADVISOR LAST YEAR DESPITE FACT THAT HIS VIEWS ARE SHARPLY OUT OF LINE WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY.

5. COMMENT: AVINERI NOMINATION IS INDEED IMAGINATIVE MOVE BY

ALLON AND, AS SEEN BY FIRST REACTIONS, IS BEING READ HERE AS EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN MODERATE CAMP WITHIN ISRAELI BUREAUCRACY. DESPITE LIKUD/NRP OPPOSITION, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT CABINET WILL BLOCK THE NOMINATION. ALTHOUGH A "DOVE" IN THE ISRAELI POLITICAL SPECTRUM, AVINERI HAS OFTEN BEEN A STERN CRITIC OF U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY SINCE THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR. HIS REMARKS ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE WERE CAREFULLY QUALIFIED--IN LARGE PART A RESTATEMENT OF THE "YARIV FORMULA"--AND HE IS NOT AS FAR OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM AS HAMMER AND LANDAU SUGGEST.

6. DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MFA WILL CONTINUE TO BE EPHRAIM EVRON WHO WAS WIDELY KNOWN TO WANT TO MOVE UP TO THE JOB WHICH HAS NOW GONE TO AVINERI, A MAN YEARS HIS JUNIOR WITH DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE. EVRON TOLD CHARGE FEB 12 THAT HE THOUGHT THE APPOINTMENT WAS AN EXCELLENT ONE AND HAD SO ADVISED THE FOREIGN MINISTER. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD ALSO ENSURED AVINERI, AN OLD FIEND, OF HIS LOYAL SUPPORT. AVINERI WILL TAKE OVER ABOUT APRIL 1.
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